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INDIGENOUS ISSUES

Australia*, Bolivia*, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Estonia*, Finland*, Greece*, Guatemala*, Honduras*, Mexico, New Zealand*, Nicaragua, Norway*, Peru*, Spain*, Sweden* and Switzerland*: draft resolution

1997/... Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

The Commission on Human Rights,

Conscious that, in various situations, indigenous people are unable to enjoy their inalienable human rights and fundamental freedoms, determined to do everything possible to promote the enjoyment of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, and bearing in mind that international standards must be developed on the basis of the diverse situations and aspirations of the world's indigenous people,

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* In accordance with rule 69, paragraph 3, of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council.

Bearing in mind that one of the purposes of the United Nations, as set forth in the Charter, is the achievement of international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion,

Affirming its recognition of the value and diversity of the cultures and forms of social organization of indigenous people, and that the development of indigenous people within their countries will contribute to the socio-economic, cultural and environmental advancement of all the countries of the world,

Recalling that the goal of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health, and that the theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action",

Recognizing the importance of consultation and cooperation with indigenous people in planning and implementing the programme of activities for the Decade, the need for adequate financial support from the international community, including support from within the United Nations and the specialized agencies, and the need for adequate coordination and communication channels,

Recalling also Economic and Social Council resolution 1982/34 of 7 May 1982, in which the Council authorized the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to establish annually a working group on indigenous populations with the mandate to review developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of indigenous people, giving special attention to the evolution of standards concerning the rights of indigenous people,

I

Report on the Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission

1. Takes note of the report of the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities on its forty-eighth session (E/CN.4/1997/2-E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/41) and of the report of the Working Group on its fourteenth session (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1996/21 and Corr.1);

2. Urges the Working Group to continue its comprehensive review of developments and of the diverse situations and aspirations of the World's indigenous people, and welcomes its proposal to highlight specific themes of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People at its future sessions;

3. Invites the Working Group to take into account in its deliberations on developments pertaining to the promotion and protection of the human rights of indigenous people the work, within the framework of their respective mandates, of all thematic special rapporteurs, special representatives, independent experts, working groups and expert seminars as it pertains to the situation of indigenous people;

4. Recommends to the Economic and Social Council that the Working Group be authorized to meet for five working days prior to the forty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission;

5. Invites the Working Group to continue its consideration as to whether there are ways in which the contribution of expertise from indigenous people to the work of the Working Group might be enhanced, and encourages all the initiatives that can be taken by Governments, organizations of indigenous people and non-governmental organizations to ensure the full participation of indigenous people in the activities related to the tasks of the Working Group;

6. Takes note of paragraph 6 of Sub-Commission resolution 1996/31 regarding the working paper on the concept of indigenous people prepared by the Chairperson-Rapporteur of the Working Group (E/CN.4/AC.4/1996/2);

7. Requests the Secretary-General:

(a) To give adequate resources and assistance to the Working Group in discharging its tasks, including adequate dissemination of information about the activities of the Working Group to Governments, specialized agencies, non-governmental organizations and organizations of indigenous people, in order to encourage the widest possible participation in its work;

(b) To transmit the reports of the Working Group to Governments, organizations of indigenous people and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as soon as possible, for specific comments and suggestions;

8. Appeals to all Governments, organizations and individuals in a position to do so to consider contributing to the United Nations Voluntary Fund for Indigenous Populations;

II

International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

9. Takes note of the report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (E/CN.4/1997/101);

10. Invites the Working Group on Indigenous Populations to continue its review of activities undertaken during the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, and encourages Governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to provide information on the implementation of the goals of the Decade, in accordance with paragraph 16 of the annex to General Assembly resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995;

11. Welcomes the affirmation by the General Assembly that a major objective of the Decade is the adoption of a declaration on the rights of indigenous people and its recognition that among the important objectives of the Decade is the consideration of the possible establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations;

12. Recommends that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights assume responsibility for coordination of the Decade;

13. Requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights to consider organizing, taking into account the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education and recognizing the importance of strengthening the capacity of indigenous people to develop their own solutions to their problems, a workshop for research and higher education institutions focusing on indigenous issues in education, to improve exchange of information between such institutions and to encourage future cooperation, in consultation with indigenous people and in collaboration with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and other relevant United Nations bodies;

14. Requests the High Commissioner for Human Rights, noting the request by the General Assembly to the Secretary-General to produce an annual report reviewing activities within the United Nations system under the programme of activities for the Decade, and to submit an update of this report to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-fourth session under the agenda item entitled "Indigenous issues";

15. Emphasizes the important role of international cooperation in promoting the goals and activities of the Decade and the rights, well-being and sustainable development of indigenous people;

16. Encourages Governments to support the Decade by contributing to the Voluntary Fund for the Decade;

17. Also encourages Governments, as appropriate, recognizing the importance of action at the national level for the implementation of the goals and activities of the Decade, to support the Decade, in consultation with indigenous people, by

(a) Preparing relevant programmes, plans and reports in relation to the Decade and establishing national committees or other mechanisms involving indigenous people to ensure that the objectives and activities of the Decade are planned and implemented on the bases of full partnership with indigenous people;

(b) Seeking means of giving indigenous people greater responsibility for their own affairs and an effective voice in decisions on matters which affect them;

(c) Identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade;

18. Appeals to intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to support the Decade by identifying resources for activities designed to implement the goals of the Decade, in cooperation with indigenous people;

19. Encourages Governments to consider contributing, as appropriate, in support of the achievement of the goals of the Decade, to the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean;

20. Recommends that the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, when developing programmes within the framework of the International Decade for the World's Indigenous People and the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education, give due regard to the development of human rights training for indigenous people;

21. Encourages the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to cooperate with the Department of Public Information in preparing and disseminating information on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, taking due care to portray accurately the information regarding indigenous people;

22. Invites the United Nations financial and developmental institutions, operational programmes and specialized agencies, in accordance with the existing procedures of their governing bodies;

(a) To give increased priority and resources to improving the conditions of indigenous people, with particular emphasis on the needs of these people in developing countries, including by the preparation of specific programmes of action for the implementation of the goals of the Decade, within their areas of competence;

(b) To launch special projects, through appropriate channels and in collaboration with indigenous people, for strengthening their community-level initiatives, and to facilitate the exchange of information and expertise among indigenous people and other relevant experts;

(c) To designate focal points or other mechanisms for coordination with the High Commissioner for Human Rights/Centre for Human Rights of activities relating to the Decade;

23. Decides to consider the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People at its fifty-fourth session under the agenda item entitled "Indigenous issues".